

## Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 CAIRO 22475 01 OF 02 220058Z  
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W  
-----120526 220106Z /62

O 220046Z DEC 77

FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3269

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY JIDDA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 CAIRO 22475

EXDIS

FROM USDEL CAIRO 0029

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, XF, US

SUBJECT: CAIRO CONFERENCE: IN HOLDING PATTERN UNTIL  
BEGIN-SADAT MEETING

1. SCHEDULED DECEMBER 21 MEETING OF CONFERENCE WAS POST-  
PONED AT ISRAELI DELEGATE BEN-ELISSAR'S REQUEST TO  
ENABLE HIM TO MEET WITH WEIZMAN AT CAIRO AIRPORT SHORTLY  
BEFORE LATTER'S DEPARTURE. CONFERENCE WILL MEET  
TOMORROW DECEMBER 22, AT 11:00A.M.

2. FROM ALL PRESENT INDICATIONS, AND UNLESS ONE OF PARTIES  
DECIDES TO INTRODUCE NEW MATERIAL FOR DISCUSSION,  
MEETING TOMORROW WILL NOT HAVE MUCH TO DO. SUB-COMMITTEE  
OF LEGAL EXPERTS MET AGAIN TODAY BUT FAILED TO COME UP  
WITH AGREED LANGUAGE FOR AGENDA. IN ADDITION TO AGREEMENT  
ON TITLE (WITH EXCEPTION OF THE ONE WORD "TREATY" OR  
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"AGREEMENT" AS REPORTED USDEL 0026), THERE IS NOW ALSO  
ONE AGREED ITEM FOR AGENDA: "SECURITY COUNCIL  
RESOLUTIONS 242 AND 338 AS THE AGREED BASIS FOR SETTLEMENT  
OF THE CONFLICT." EGYPTIANS HAVE APPARENTLY BEEN WILLING  
TO ALLOW THIS BROAD FORMULATION TO SUBSUME THEIR ORIGINAL  
FOUR-POINT AGENDA SUBMISSION--EXCEPT FOR PALESTINIAN ISSUE,  
WHICH THEY INSIST MUST BE ADDITIONAL SPECIFICATION ON AGENDA

TO TAKE CARE OF "INADEQUACY" OF SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION 242 ON THIS ISSUE. ISRAELIS HAVE TAKEN POSITION THAT IF "DETAILS" OF SC RES 242 ARE SPELLED OUT, THEN THERE ARE A NUMBER OF POINTS ISRAEL WOULD LIKE TO SEE ITEMIZED IN AGENDA AS WELL. EGYPTIANS HAVE PUT FORWARD NUMBER OF FORMULATIONS TO MAKE AGENDA ITEMS ON PALESTINIANS AS INNOCUOUS AS POSSIBLE, BUT ISRAELIS TELL US THEIR LATEST INSTRUCTIONS FROM JERUSALEM IN FACT TELL THEM NOT TO AGREE TO ANYTHING ON PALESTINIANS UNTIL BEGIN-SADAT MEETING TAKES PLACE. EGYPTIANS HERE AT MENA HOUSE SEEM TO UNDERSTAND WHAT THE PROBLEM IS AND TO BE RELAXED. THEY ARE PROBABLY ALSO UNDER TIGHT REIN THEMSELVES IN PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES. LEGAL SUB-COMMITTEE SEEMS TO HAVE RUN ITS COURSE UNTIL SOME NEW FLEXIBILITY IS INJECTED INTO TWO SIDES' POSITIONS, PRESUMABLY AS RESULT OF ISMAILIA SUMMIT.

3. AS FOOTNOTE TO ABOVE, BEN-ELISSAR TOLD US THIS MORNING THAT IN ATTEMPT TO FIND AGREED LANGUAGE ON PALESTINIAN ITEM, HE HAD SUGGESTED INFORMALLY THE FORMULATION "RIGHTS OF THE PALESTINIAN ARABS;" EGYPTIANS HAD COUNTERED WITH "RIGHTS OF THE PALESTINIAN ARAB PEOPLE." BEN-ELISSAR TOLD US ISRAEL COULD NEVER AGREE TO "PEOPLE." THIS EXCHANGE APPEARS TO HAVE NO OFFICIAL STATUS, BUT WE REPORT IT AS INDICATION OF THE KIND OF CHEMISTRY THAT IS GOING ON HERE BETWEEN TWO DELEGATIONS.

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4. WE ARE HEARING SOME MILD COMPLAINTS AMONG LOWER-LEVEL MEMBERS OF EGYPTIAN DELEGATION ABOUT PASSIVE U.S. ROLE AT CONFERENCE. WE HAVE TOLD BOTH ISRAELIS AND EGYPTIANS OUR PHILOSOPHY AT THIS CONFERENCE IS THAT THIS IS FIRST DIRECT EGYPTIAN-ARAB DIALOGUE TO OCCUR IN RECENT TIMES AND WE WANT TO GIVE IT EVERY OPPORTUNITY TO DEVELOP AND SUCCEED. EGYPTIANS AT SENIOR LEVEL ACCEPT THIS, AND WHEN WE MAKE IT CLEAR THAT WE ARE READY TO HELP WITH ANY SPECIFIC PROBLEMS, NOTHING SPECIFIC IS ADVANCED AND CONVERSATION TURNS TO OTHER SUBJECTS. EGYPTIANS AT WORKING LEVEL HERE ARE PERIODICALLY BITTEN BY ACTIVIST BUG BUT THEY BASICALLY ALSO UNDERSTAND WE ARE ALL IN HOLDING PATTERN UNTIL THE TWO LEADERS MEET IN ISMAILIA. THESE COMMENTS ABOUT U.S. ROLE HAVE NOT REPEAT NOT BEEN MADE TO US BY ABDEL MEGUID. ISRAELIS ARE OF COURSE QUITE HAPPY WITH THINGS AS THEY ARE.

5. COMMENT: IT IS WORTH NOTING THAT, IN CONTRAST TO OUR

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-----120562 220107Z /62

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S E C R E T SECTION 02 OF 02 CAIRO 22475

EXDIS

FROM USDEL CAIRO 0029

3.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, XF,US

SUBJECT: CAIRO CONFERENCE: IN HOLDING PATTERN UNTIL  
BEGIN-SADAT MEETING

EXPERIENCE AS THIRD PARTY AT GENEVA WORKING GROUP  
MEETINGS IN 1974-75, NEITHER SIDE HAS APPEALED TO US  
SO FAR TO WEIGH IN TO SUPPORT ITS POSITION, ALTHOUGH  
THERE HAVE BEEN SEVERAL OCCASIONS WHEN THEY COULD HAVE  
DONE SO -- E.G., TO SUPPORT ISRAELI INSISTENCE ON  
"TREATY" VS. "AGREEMENT," OR EGYPTIAN INSISTENCE ON  
"RIGHTS OF PALESTINIAN PEOPLE" (PER U.S.-SOVIET JOINT  
STATEMENT) VS. "PALESTINIAN ARABS." ATHERTON HAS ASKED  
BOTH SIDES NOT TO SPRING REQUEST IN FORMAL MEETINGS  
FOR US TO SUPPORT ONE SIDE AGAINST THE OTHER; BOTH HAVE  
RESPECTED THIS AND HAVE SAID THAT, IF IT COMES TO THIS  
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POINT, THEY WILL LET US KNOW IN ADVANCE SO WE CAN SEEK  
INSTRUCTIONS. IT IS CLEAR THAT ISRAELIS HAVE NO  
DESIRE TO ACTIVATE SUCH A U.S. ROLE AND THAT

EGYPTIANS -- WHO MAY WISH TO DO SO AT SOME POINT --  
ARE UNDER INSTRUCTIONS TO HOLD THEIR FIRE. IF, OR MORE  
LIKELY WHEN, THEY DO ASK US TO WEIGH IN, IT WILL  
ALMOST CERTAINLY BE IN A MORE PORTENTIOUS  
CONTEXT, AND NOT SIMPLY TO SCORE DEBATING POINTS. BOTH  
SIDES CLEARLY REALIZE THAT THIS IS A NEW BALL GAME  
AND ARE PLAYING IT SO FAR WITH A DETERMINATION NOT  
TO BE THE ONE TO BLOW IT. ALL IN ALL, IT IS A RATHER  
AWESOME MOMENT, WITH MUCH HANGING ON WHAT HAPPENS  
CHRISTMAS DAY. EILTS

SECRET

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## Message Attributes

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